CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies News

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## From the Dean's Desk "Daring to Excel"

The 1987 **Campaign for Concordia** is in full swing. Its objective is simple: "to lift the University past its current threshold". This succint message is part of a dynamic new video presentation about Concordia's past, present and future. As we all know one of the main purposes of the **Campaign** is the realization of our new library projects. The details are exciting.

The Downtown Library Complex will be constructed between September 1987 and July 1989. In the official campaign publication; **The Case for Support**, "Daring to Excel", it is described as follows: "The new library will be opposite the Henry F. Hall Building and will rise to challenge it. But although nine storeys at its highest level, the building is designed to blend gracefully with its Bishop Court neighbours. The below-ground facilities will include a cinema, parking garage, and a tunnel link to the Hall Building. Slightly more than 50 percent of the floor space will be devoted to the library facilities. The ground floor will house the University's new art gallery, book store, cafeteria and student services offices. An especially stunning feature will be Place Concordia — a gallery-style public area that will enliven the entire building."

The Vanier Library on the Loyola Campus, named after one of Loyola's most illustrious sons, is already under construction. By March 1988, the "project will result in a doubling of the library space... There will be a three-storey library extension, together with renovation of the existing structure, which will permit the conversion of one-third of its area into offices, seminar rooms and classrooms. An atrium will link the new Vanier Library to the Campus Centre and the new concert hall."

What is the immediate impact of all these exciting developments on graduate studies at Concordia? As we are all too well aware, graduate studies is almost synonymous with library work. Concordia is now in the process of crafting and refining the primary tool for this activity. The benefits for graduate students at Concordia will therefore be dramatic, in both psychological and physical terms. We are one of the major graduate schools of Canada. To celebrate this fact, the Division of Graduate Studies has successfully negotiated with the Concordia Libraries an agreement whereby all of Concordia's Ph.D. graduates will become honorary life members of our library system. This agreement will perpetuate Chancellor W. Earle McLaughlin's characterization of Concordia as a "meeting place", a locale where we may discover "people beginning, advancing, changing, returning or retiring from their careers."

March is both an exhilarating and demanding month for many of our graduate students. It is the month of thesis deadlines. At this time most students' moods oscillate between supreme joy and abject despair. A successfully defended thesis, more than any other piece of writing, symbolizes a level of personal achievement and growth unparalleled by almost any other accomplishment. Concordia graduates can finally look forward to having their precious publications displayed in dignified new surroundings. I urge all of you, when depositing your theses in the Graduate Studies Office to make a special contribution to the final phase of the library component of the **Campaign for Concordia**. The thesis office will gladly accept your library donations and forward them to Campaign Headquarters on your behalf.

M. E. Sabo

# The Executive MBA Program

Once a week, executives and professionals gather in the early morning at Concordia's downtown campus. When they arrive, they park their cars at reduced rates, are served breakfast, as well as lunch and study using books provided by the University. They also receive support in such areas as producing audio/visual materials for presentations. Does this sound out of the ordinary?

Concordia's Executive MBA program takes no ordinary approach to academia. It was designed exclusively for those who already have considerable professional experience and seek additional training in business administration.

"The program is meant to appeal to management", says Naim Mahlab, director of the program. "It is intended for those who have been removed from an academic environment for several years".

"The difference between this and other MBA programs is that the discussion level is totally different. All of the people in the Executive MBA program are working — they have executive positions. In regular MBA programs you don't have the same level of experience that you do in this program."

This is not meant as a slight to other MBA programs, which are generally geared to students with little or no business experience. The point is that those who have spent several years in the work force, and have risen through the corporate ranks, have different academic needs than do younger students.

In fact, the two-year Executive MBA program will not accept applicants who have completed Bachelor's degrees in Commerce within the past two years. It seems that one of the more appealing aspects of the program is that applicants know that their fellow students are working professionals, like themselves. "The students don't want to sit in a classroom full of 21-year-olds," says Mahlab.

"Our students have an average age of 40, and we have students anywhere from 29 to 56 years of age," he adds. "The program attracts a lot of engineers — because being a good engineer doesn't make you a good manager. We also attract many students from the technical fields who don't have previous managerial training. But we also attract private entrepreneurs."

The one-day-a-week teaching format — alternating Fridays and Saturdays — was designed with working people in mind, and, with eight hours of classroom time a week, it is considered full-time study.

Those eight hours are divided into two, four-hour classes which all of the students must take — there are no option courses. So unlike most academic programs in which students attend any number of classes with various groups of students, those in the Executive MBA program start and finish their degrees with the same group of people.

Executive MBA class session

Mahlab says, this, combined with the social contact that comes from sharing meals, results in "a peer-group experience that is unmatched. The students help and learn from each other in this program. The group is a mix of business managers who have succeeded in different fields. They all bring their experience to the classroom." He tells of one student, with a background in statistics who was standing at the blackboard before the professor arrived in the morning giving her classmates additional instruction. Two other students, he adds, live in Ottawa and share a hotel room when they come to town.

However, all is not croissants and congeniality. There is work to do, and plenty of it. Some have described the workload as brutal, and a small number do not complete the program. The eight hours of lessons in accounting, marketing, statistics and organizational behaviour (first-term subjects) cover what is normally taught in 12 hours in the standard MBA program. Students are therefore expected to do a great deal of preparation before each class — which can easily take up to 30 hours a week. A B-average must be maintained.

Instruction involves lectures and case studies, and students are expected to make oral presentations and to produce a research paper. Of the hundred or so applicants, about 30 are accepted into the program every year.

All of the professors have business experience and teach on "a very practical level". Mahlab himself was a Vice-President at Petrofina, where he spent 25 years, and now works as a consultant for the Kruger paper company. He came to Concordia in 1983 as an executive-in-residence, and the position of director of the program was offered to him, rather than an academic, because of his extensive business contacts — the kind of contacts that will allow the program to bring in former Liberal Finance Minister, Marc Lalonde as a guest speaker in April.

Mahlab says administrators are now considering the possibility of offering such a program in Ottawa, after an open-house at the Chateau Laurier attracted four times as many interested applicants as expected. There are already eight students from Ottawa in the program.

The program was initiated two years ago, and is one of two such programs available in Canada. Tuition is $9,000 a year or $18,000 for two years which includes meals, books, and other academic accoutrements. Admission requirements are a Bachelor's degree with high standing, a good score on the Graduate Management Admission Test and previous business experience. Mahlab did point out though, that grade point average is not the main criterion by which applicants are accepted, as someone who graduated perhaps 20 years ago went through educational programs with little resemblance to today's.

Depending upon an applicant's professional experience, the degree requirement may be waived entirely. Two students in their first year of the Executive MBA program are company managers who never went to university. Says Mahlab: "You don't need degrees to get promotions."

People such as these feel the need to keep up with new graduates on the job market, and to make the transition from specialist to generalist. The common feeling is that the upper ranks of the corporate world are reserved for this group.

As for the hard work, Mahlab shrugs, "It's like jogging — you catch your second breath and you proceed very smoothly."

Any questions regarding the Executive MBA program should be directed to it's Program Director, Mr. Naim Mahlab at (514) **848-2993**, or write to the program at: Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1M8.

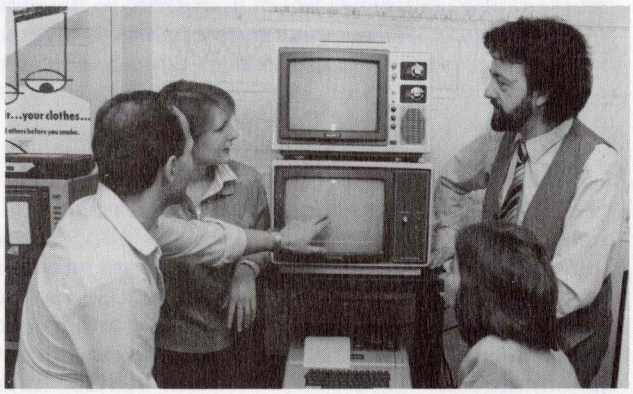
## Graduate Programs in Educational Technology

In recent years, scientists have devised a computer system that can diagnose human illness. In the future, it is quite possible that researchers will design artificial intelligence with the capacity to diagnose weak areas in a student's knowledge of a particular subject. In the field of Educational Technology, this is only one of many ways in which the multi-faceted discipline will grow to have increasing importance and impact upon our lives.

Simply put, Educational Technology involves the interplay of scientific advances with educational needs. It is a body of knowledge that has evolved out of the intersecting sets of other bodies of knowledge. Those include the psychology of learning, engineering, communication, education, educational broadcasting, planning and organization, and the curriculum development of learning systems.

A departmental publication describes the field, now about 25 years old, as "the application to education of devices, processes and styles of thinking developed outside the field of education."

This may involve anything from helping companies put together training and retraining programs to helping developing countries analyse and improve their own education systems. It may also involve the analysis of self-instructional programs, such as correspondance courses, and discover ways to develop them in such a way as to improve the current completion record — now only one in ten students complete these programs.



In Canada, there are only three universities offering programs in Educational Technology. Dr. Richard Schmid, Graduate Program Director for Educational Technology, says that while other schools offer components of Educational Technology within other departments, Concordia is the only English-language university in Canada to have a complete program in the field. The department offers a master's as well as a doctoral program in the field, along with two graduate diploma programs.

The nature of the program is diverse and draws students from various academic backgrounds, from all age groups and from all walks of life. "We get people from all areas, quite literally," says Dr. Schmid. A department document states that entrance requirements are as follows: "Previous work in the behavioural sciences, computer science, educational sciences or engineering may be especially relevant but students who have majored in the liberal or fine arts have been very successful."

Up to 40 percent of those students admitted to the program already have jobs — mostly in the educational field — and enroll in order to acquire additional job skills. In most cases, courses are given in the late afternoon and evening, to accommodate both full and part-time students.

An average of 25 students are admitted every year to the MA program, while another eight to ten are admitted to the Ph.D. program. Competition for these places is tough, with room for only one out of four applicants.

The Educational Technology program at Concordia — which was established in 1969 — focuses on three main aspects: the implementation of media technologies to instructional environments; systems analysis, with several courses in educational cybernetics (meaning the study of how components of an educational system work together); and instructional design, for example, the development of instructional programs to prepare railway employees for the change-over from a manual to a computerized train switching system.

Students in the program must take a broad range of courses, says Professor Schmid, in order to develop a wide range of skills. This range of skills is diverse enough that graduates are able to write a different resumé for any given job, highlighting whatever area of expertise is required for the job.

Schmid describes career prospects as good, especially in the areas of computer-assisted learning programs and industrial training. Like the Educational Technology program, graduates have varied interests and tend to branch off in many directions. Some find work at television stations such as TV Ontario and Tele-University in Montreal while others work for the government as researchers. A small number have started their own companies dealing with aspects of instructional design. One such venture is a company producing video satellite dishes.

Both the MA and Ph.D. are 90-credit programs, and both involve course work as well as a research thesis. The Master's program is oriented to producing graduates with specific skills in either of the two options available: in the research and development of Educational Technology; and in the production and evaluation of educational materials. The Ph.D. program involves independent study and requires a research thesis that is original in nature and broader in scope than its counterpart in the Master's program.

The department, with eight full-time faculty members, receives $300,000 to $400,000 every year in research grants from the federal and provincial governments. Several fellowships are granted every year and about 20 students are appointed as teaching assistants.

One example of research carried on by students in the department is the production of an educational television program, testing it in the field, and then bringing it back for further improvements.

Another example of research in the department involves the work of a student who spent several years studying the cultural impact of television on the Inuit in Canada's North, and the development of the Inuit Broadcasting System, the third largest broadcasting expense in Canada after the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board.

Original research frequently finds its way into publications and papers, and despite the fact this is not one of the largest departments in the University, its faculty have written or edited 12 different books and have written more than 240 articles, reviews and chapters in books.

Those seeking further information can contact Professor Richard Schmid at (514) **848-2019**, or write to the Department of Educational Technology, Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Room 549-21, Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1M8.

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Graduate Profile:

Marc A. Comeau, Ph.D.

Marc Comeau graduated in May 1986 with a doctoral degree from the Department of Electrical Engineering here at Concordia.

He is currently employed as a researcher by Le Centre de Recherche Informatique de Montréal, Inc., (C.R.I.M.), – Groupe Telematique and as Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering at Concordia.

Dr. Comeau's research interests include: distributed computing, discreet optimization, graph-theoretic modeling, queueing systems, and system performance evaluation.

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